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SUBJECT: HZDS LEADER MECIAR UNDERGOES SUCCESSFUL QUADRUPLE
BYPASS

1, (U) Vladimir Meciar, Chairman of HZDS (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia) and former Slovak Prime Minister during the 1990s, underwent quadruple bypass heart surgery on January 21 in Banska Bystrica at the Central Slovakia Institute for Heart and Vein Diseases (Institute). In Meciar's absence, Milan Urbani, the number two in HZDS, is Acting Chairman of the party and Vice-Chair Zdenka Kramplova is handling matters of party administration.

12. (U) Rumors of Meciar's health problems and potential heart surgery had been circulating for several weeks. In mid-December, Meciar was hospitalized for difficulty breathing. His medical examination, including a coronary catheterization, indicated the necessity for heart surgery. Dr. Peter Meciar, a distant relative of Vladimir Meciar, is Director of the Institute.

13. (U) On January 21 at 09:00 Meciar arrived at the Institute escorted by his wife and son. The operation started at 14:00 and lasted approximately three hours. At a short briefing following the operation, the leader of the surgical team composed of cardiovascular specialists from Banska Bystrica and Kosice informed journalists that the operation went smoothly. The team performed a revascularization of the myocardium with multiple (4) bypasses. After the surgery, Meciar was transferred to the intensive care unit. At a press conference the following day, doctors announced that Meciar was conscious, recovering without complications, and remained in the ICU. If his recovery continues to go well, they said, Meciar could be released from the hospital in seven or eight days and could be back to politics two or three weeks after that.

14. (SBU) COMMENT. The relatively common nature of this type of operation, plus Meciar's continuing total control of the party, left little opportunity for speculation about a HZDS after Meciar.
VALLEE